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**WELLS FARGO
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS**

**Wells Fargo Center for the Arts
Celebrates Latino Heritage Month
And Commemorates Mexican Independence Day with its
6th Annual FREE *Fiesta de Independencia***

Sunday, September 13, 2015

SANTA ROSA, CA (August 12 2015) – Wells Fargo Center for the Arts (50 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa) celebrates Latino Heritage Month and commemorates Mexican Independence Day with its annual ***Fiesta de Independencia***, a popular daylong event highlighting the diverse cultures that are a part of the North Bay community. Now in its sixth year showcasing the tastes, sounds and sights of Mexico and other Latino cultures, the free outdoor event takes place from **1-6 P.M. on Sunday, September 13**. Organized by the Center's Latino Advisory Council, the family-friendly, campus-wide festival is an opportunity for guests to experience a traditional fiesta as they enjoy authentic food, music, games, performances and more.

Fiesta de Independencia began at the Center in 2010 to commemorate Mexican Independence Day (September 16), and it has since evolved to celebrate the rich history of all the diverse Latino cultures and people who are an integral part of the North Bay community. Drawing more than 3,000 community members each year, the event has become a Sonoma County tradition. The Fiesta is a community-wide celebration of cultures, people and traditions that also educates the community about Hispanic history and Latino businesses in Sonoma County. This year, ***Fiesta de Independencia*** has an even broader focus to be more inclusive as a signature event for Latino Heritage Month.

Contributing to the jubilant atmosphere at the event is the popular salsa tasting competition (individual and restaurant categories), low-rider car show, and a variety of performances showcasing local and regional artists. In addition this year's Fiesta will be larger in scope and will include a new tented area to watch performances from, as well as more ethnic food specialties and a particular emphasis on showcasing distinctive educational outreach within the community featuring performances by students and children. These special performances and exhibits include:

- The children’s Mariachi Band that just completed the first-ever Mariachi Camp sponsored by Wells Fargo Center for the Arts and taught by Jose Soto. The children’s Mariachi Band, comprised of 50 students, ages 8 to 17, will perform with Soto’s professional Mariachi Band, Mariachi Barragan.
- A performance from the Santa Rosa Symphony’s “Simply Strings” program will kick off Fiesta
- Through a partnership with the Roseland School District, students will create and showcase exhibits about seven Latin American countries celebrating their country’s independence in the month of September.

In addition, **Community Leadership Awards** will be presented in three categories – businesses, non-profit organizations, and individuals – to those who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to the Latino Community through volunteerism, education, mentorship, or other personal or professional efforts.

“We are excited about the expanded scope and activities at this year’s Fiesta,” noted Latino Advisory Council member and Wells Fargo Center for the Arts Board Member **Ernesto Olivares**. “As participation and attendance at this event has grown over the first five years, it is fitting and appropriate that we make sure the Fiesta is celebrating and sharing a broad cross-section of the Latino cultures in our community.”

The creation of **Fiesta de Independencia** would not be possible without the help of the Latino Advisory Council (LAC) as well as the Fiesta’s sponsors, which include Wells Fargo Bank, Clover Stornetta Farms, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Sonoma County, the City of Santa Rosa, Radio Lazer/La Mejor, CAP Sonoma, El Patron, Excitos, TV Azteca, El Consulado General de México en San Francisco and of course all the community advocates.

About Wells Fargo Center for the Arts

A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Wells Fargo Center for the Arts is home to world-class performances, nationally recognized education programs, contemporary visual art, and many popular events. The Arts Center is located in the heart of the Sonoma wine country and ranked among California’s top performing arts presenters. Together with its resident companies, the Center presents more than 100 performances in music, dance, theater, renowned speakers, and comedy; provides education programs serving 30,000 children and adults; and hosts more than 1,000 community events a year. Owned and operated by the Luther Burbank Memorial Foundation, the Center relies on charitable community donations to achieve its mission – to enrich, educate, and entertain.

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